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Names in the Far East.

Newspaper readers should not take it to heart if they are unable readily to pronounce the names with which the telegraphic news from the Russo-Japanese war is burdened, or if they find the names of people and of places printed in many different ways in the papers. For the truth is that there exists no rule by which these names shall be spelled or pronounced, from an American standpoint.

It is dispiriting, of course, for a reader to run head-on into a mass of jagged, impregnable names in following the Russian and Japanese operations, but the situation might be worse.

The New York Tribune pertinently suggests that the war in East Asia is preferable to our old friend the war cloud in the Balkans in one respect, namely, of the names it involves. Turkish names were not particularly bad, nor Roumanian, but those of the other lands and peoples involved were literally unspeakable. For what mere Anglo-Saxon tongue can do justice to a name which written displays one vowel and sixteen consonants, and spoken resembles nothing so much as three coughs and a sneeze? In East Asia there is, of course, some incursion of Russian barbarities of speech. But, the Tribune points out, so far as Japan, Korea and China are concerned, all is pretty easy writing and speaking, after all. Short names, abounding in melodious vowels and liquid consonants, make the local nomenclature a thing of beauty and a joy.

In so far as the names in question are at all perplexing, the circumstance is due to outside perversity. The variorum editions of some of the simplest and most musical names are little short of distracting to even the most philosophic mind. The seesaw of "Corea" and "Korea" we can endure, through long habituation. But what shall be said of the name of the capital of that country? We were brought up to write it "Seoul." But some of our neighbors persist in spelling it "Seul." Others aver that "Soul" is the only proper form. Still others are satisfied with nothing but "Sul." And now here comes an estimable authority with the assurance that we shall not know salvation unless we write it "Seyool." In such case, what are we to do? Call it "Constantinople" and go on to the next word?

Well, the next is Manchuria. What! Oh, well, "Manchooria," if you please, or "Manchouria," if you prefer; or "Mantchuria," if you like that better; or "Mantchoorie," if you insist upon it; or "Mantchouria," if you won't be happy until you get it. All six forms are in use, and, for all we know, half a dozen more. Then there is Moukden. There are those who regard with pity those who know not "Mukden," and also those who are prepared to maintain "Mookden" against all the world. Nor does the Amoor escape. Some insist that it is the "Amour," while others with equal confidence proclaim it the "Amur." Of course, too, there is the Yalu, or Yaloo; and also the Sungari, or Soongari; likewise Chefoo, or Chifoo, or Chefu, or Chifu; not to mention Tokio, or Tokyo, and Fusan, or Foo-San, and—but that way madness lies.

It is probably useless to protest against such vagaries. There is no positive authority upon these names, since the Chinese and Japanese originals are not spelled with letters, but are expressed with ideographs. Each man will insist on interpreting them as he pleases; and our elastic language makes it possible to express the same sound with "oo," or "ou," or long "u." Where, however, such possibility of diversity exists, with substantial indifference among the various forms, it is a great pity that uniformity cannot be agreed upon and stuck to. When the world had for many years been accustomed to write "Seoul," and when that form expressed the sound of the native name as perfectly as any combination of English letters could express it, where was the good in inventing "Seul," and "Soul," and "Sul," and "Seyool"? Granted that these also express the same identical sound with equal exactness, they do it no better than the old form did and does; and there is no use in discarding an old and familiar thing for a new and strange one, unless something is to be gained by the change.

Is Ability Becoming Scarce?

An address made before the recent convention of the American Economic association by Professor Henry C. Adams has attracted general attention. In discussing "trusts" Professor Adams suggested as the first cause of the growth of industrial combinations an alleged paucity of "business ability," and asserted that the development of brains has "not kept pace" with the rapid development of the mechanical side of industry. The question raised is provoking a spirited discussion, but the consensus of opinion seems to be against the Adams theory. Speaking for the railway industry, the Railway Age insists that a "paucity of business ability" is not found in the great industry of transportation, and other trade papers are equally emphatic.

It seems, indeed, purely fantastic to argue that the multiplicity of trade combinations is because there is a lack of individual ability. At the outset the argument suggests an inquiry as to when and where this cause began to operate. The organization of business has moved toward larger and larger units of control and supervision ever since the marvelous series of labor saving inventions, which practically began with the spinning jenny and the power loom, signalized the downfall of household industry. Clearly it was not "paucity of business ability" which led those who availed themselves of these early contrivances for making capital to do the work of human energy, to gather workmen together in factories rather than to leave them in scattered cottages that too often scarcely deserve the name of hovels. Nor was it because economic provision was lacking that factories grew larger and industry became more and more specialized and localized as men learned to construct greater and more efficient productive machinery, and the newly created facilities for cheap rail and water transportation lengthened the radii of economical distribution. In fact, these things were accomplished because directing ability had kept pace with inventive skill, and they could not have happened otherwise. The same stimuli which inaugurated the wonderful mechanical progress of the nineteenth century and endowed it with unabating virility operated upon those who chose the fields of organization and direction in preference to that of mere mechanics.

Of course, Professor Adams' assertion has the apparent sanction which it derives from the fact that relatively fewer men than formerly now occupy position in industry in which they exercise control without direct accountability to official superiors. There are relatively fewer supreme chief executives and relatively more subordinates. In other words, ultimate authority is less subdivided. This fact is not, however, inconsistent with a great increase in real directing ability. On the contrary, it has helped to cause such an increase and serves, in part, to explain it.

Enormous Insurance Figures.

The three leading life insurance companies have issued their annual statements, and the figures presented of financial magnitude are in themselves almost startling. According to the New York Financier, the combined assets of these companies aggregate nearly 1,136 millions of dollars, a sum larger than the total deposits of the clearing house banks of New York city, and one-half as large as all the actual money in circulation in the United States. These vast resources do not represent corporate or monopolistic accumulation, as the word is understood. The great insurance companies are merely co-operative bodies made up of hundreds of thousands of units in the form of policy holders, who, in fact, are the companies, and could, if they chose, or the occasion required, exercise a dominant voice in their direction.

The three companies have outstanding insurance to the amount of over 4,400 million dollars, and seem to be adding to the total at the rate of about 750 millions annually. Insurance in force from year to year does not reveal an increase as large, for the reason, of course, that lapses, death payments, etc., cut into the totals. The three companies are paying to policyholders, in satisfaction of claims, something like 125 millions of dollars every year, and their income last year was more than 239 millions, or about two-thirds of a million dollars for every day in the year. One of the three largest concerns makes the announcement that it has returned to policyholders since it first organized, more than 630 millions. It is safe to say that the total for the three companies approaches 1,500 millions. About the only comparison that can make plain what this means is to say that the three insurance companies have paid in claims a sum one-half larger than the present national debt.

The ultimate growth of the leading life insurance companies has not been reached. One concern is now over the 400 million mark in resources, and it is only a question of time when the three already cited pass the half billion mark. There is nothing to stop them, so far as known, from obtaining a billion dollar altitude in time. Their growth, it is unnecessary to repeat, is a blessing to all who are connected with them, and every dollar added to their strength is a dollar laid aside by policyholders just as much as though it went into the savings bank.

There need be no fear that this accumulation of wealth is dangerous, any more than one need fear the steady prosperity of all the country, for it is merely representative of the thrift and foresight of a considerable portion of our population. Those who sit up nights worrying over the accumulating wealth of our excessively rich men may find a grain of consolation in the the thought that the life insurance companies are not only richer than our wealthiest citizens, but are growing in affluence, or importance, more rapidly than any private interest. The buying power of the great insurance companies is a steadying force in the investment; it is a regulating factor in the financial world, and through ramifications which extend from ocean to ocean, a conservative influence which guarantees peace and orderliness in a larger measure than supposed.

CURRENT COMMENT

WHY THE JAPS WENT TO WAR.

The total area of Japan is but little more than the combined areas of Kansas and Missouri. Japan is smaller than Texas. Alaska would make three of her. California is nearer her exact size than any other political division of the earth's surface. Yet where Kansas and Missouri think they are a bit crowded with their combined population 4,500,000, Japan has a population of 41,000,000, not counting those who have spread over into Formosa, Korea and other neighboring provinces. But this is not the whole story. Despite the common impression that Japan is the garden spot of the world, she has only one tillable acre out of eight the greatest portion of her territory being mountainous, rocky and unfit for any species of agriculture.

Perhaps there is no other place in the world where the problems of life are figured so close as in Japan. Every foot of suitable soil is made to yield every ounce of food that can possibly be taken from it. Japanese farms average about the size of American town lots. The waters of the country are cultivated as carefully as the soil. Fish, in fact, is the greatest food production of the island. Yet with all this the kingdom is wholly unable to produce enough to keep its population alive, and this fact brings us to the really significant feature of the present Japanese-Russian war—to the thought that what Japan is fighting for is the right to live.

For centuries Japan has relied upon Korea as a food source. Korea is to Japan in an agricultural sense just what the western states are to the Atlantic seaboard. If Russia is permitted to take Korea away from her—that is, to close the territory as a sphere of Japanese trade and influence—it will menace her national existence.

We have come to speak of Japan as a warlike nation. Still in one thousand years Japan has engaged in conflict only three times. The first of her wars was with the Kublai Khan, the Mongol conqueror, who was repulsed from an expedition of conquest near the end of the thirteenth century. The second was in 1592-8, when her armies made conquest of Korea, the present bone of contention. The third was the struggle with China a few years ago. In the last two wars the essence of the struggle was for room to expand. In the war with Korea, it was the aim of the Japanese statesmen to extend the political power of the Japanese throne over all China, but the underlying purpose was to secure new territory in which the Japanese civilization might find room to grow. This, too, was the underlying purpose of the recent war with China. The war was made with the idea of taking Chinese territory on which to plant Japanese colonies and thus relieve the overcrowded condition of the island proper. When Europe stepped in and compelled Japan to satisfy herself with the island of Formosa and a cash indemnity, it was making certain the war of today, for there is no logic which can conceive of Japan remaining content with her pent-up condition while virgin territory like Korea lay close to her view. Still the war might have been averted for years had not Russia greedily sought that which Japan had been deprived of by the concert of the powers. So long as Japan was permitted to dominate the commerce of Korea, as she did and to draw her agricultural supplies from that rich province, she perhaps could afford to remain at peace and await the developments which time might bring forth. But not so when Russia moved from Manchuria on Korea. No statesman in the world can justify Russia on that move and condemn Japan for seeking to block it. If Japan had remained peaceful under the circumstances it would have been at the risk of national dissolution.

We believe that the best sentiment of the world is willing that Japan should have Korea and her chance to grow. The island people have shown themselves to be the most capable and most progressive of all the orientals. They have astonished the world, in fact, by the facility with which the have taken on the ways of modern civilization. No one can doubt that the future of Korea will be far more satisfactory under the rule of the progressive Jap than under the rule of the coarse and barbaric Russ. And a nicer adjustment of the balance of power on the Asiatic side of the Pacific could not be thought of.—Kansas City Journal.

RUFFIANISM ON THE CARS.

The report in this paper yesterday of the alleged assault of a conductor on a Rochester & Eastern trolley car on Reuben D. Van de Carr, a respected citizen of this city, needs investigation by the authorities of the road named. According to Mr. Van de Carr's account the assault was wanton, brutal and dastardly. The fact that he had pulled the cord signaling the motorman to stop could not possibly warrant any physical attack on the passenger. This case, no doubt, will be settled in the courts, and the conductor's side of the story is to be heard; but the railway authorities should understand that the public will not tolerate any ruffianism on the part of their employes. Many of the latter on the road named, as well as on the city company's cars, are courteous and considerate in their treatment of passengers; but there are some who are rank offenders against decency in their treatment of the public. Conductors should be informed that they have no right to lay a hand on a passenger, unless the latter is creating a disturbance, and then only so much force can be used under the law as is essential to the maintenance of order. Specific instances of rudeness might be cited, but this general warning ought to be sufficient.—Rochester (N. Y.) News-Democrat.

COLLEGE SPORTS AND MORALS.

The figures relating to athletic sports at Harvard in President Eliot's annual report make an interesting showing of the extent to which the college boy now goes in for physical training.

Out of the 4,276 students in all departments of the university 2,963, or 69 per cent., answered the formal inquiries of the college authorities as to their participation in games and gymnasium exercises. It appears that all but 220 took fairly regular exercise of some kind during the year. Lawn tennis attracted most, 1,392 engaging in it.

Perhaps the most surprising revelation is that of the large number taking part in the heavier forms of athletics. Thus, 456 played football, 446 baseball and 424 practised rowing. That is to say, nearly 20 per cent. of the entire corps of students directly engaged in the games which are commonly supposed to be played by only the chosen few.

In the light of these figures it is well to recall Prof. Lowell's statement at the Harvard dinner in New York that the increase of wealth at the university has brought with it "no increase of vice, owing largely to the clean influence of athletics." The antagonism of athletic training to immorality was never more convincingly set forth.—New York World.

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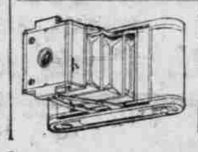

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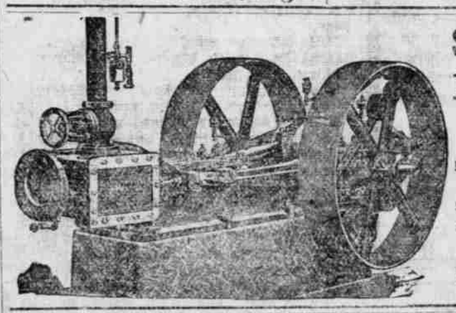

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